The COMMONWEAL

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THE INNER FORUM 78

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The Country's New Economic Policy

THE ORIGINAL OPA was set up the spring before Pearl Harbor, and during our share of the war it developed to regulate 80% of American prices. There were a lot of other "control" agencies. Price control is supposed to be down now to covering only 45% of prices, and the President says that all controls are on the road to quick liquidation, except control over rents. The Wage Stabilization Board is considered a dead duck.

Since the end of the war, at least, there has been no orderly governing of prices, and not even an objective, definable and defendable theory for fluctuating prices. The most spectacular failings of a "free market" price system, instability and unpredictability, were not corrected by the hesitating and insecure controls which were put alongside—added to and not substituted for—the supply and demand, free market. When the aim of economic life lost the target of military victory, the complicated mixed economy evidently got too complicated to operate: labor, management, government, and all the people in their own buying and selling, pulling and heaving in their various directions, failing to recognize and accept and work in our rapidly cooling off war system.

Since the NEP has been launched—or recognized—many prices have been very volatile, cotton, perversely, taking a spectacular plunge, meat and other foods going every which way as buyers and suppliers have been suddenly tested. Labor has stated a few more realistically urgent wage demands, with the Chrysler front quaking first. There is no pattern yet. And there are few sure lessons to learn yet.

A twin certainty is this: planned economizers will state absolutely that this last year's experience was no genuine test of the working of a planned or controlled economy. Free enterprizers will assert just as firmly that American conditions now, for a long time in the past and for the predictable future, do not furnish a test of a free or capitalist economic system. Both are dead right.

And we make this third assertion: that a mixed, pluralist economy has not received a useful test during this frightfully uncertain and mixed-up period. A deliberate, scientifically experimental, positively welcomed mixed system of economy must be developed. Both the sabotage of fantastic and fanatic weepers for laissez faire, and also the calculated wrecking of Stalinists and other total state socialists, who work exclusively for economic and political centralization in a state apparatus they control, have to be overcome by the positive realism of the vast majority. If those who love free enterprise joined loyally in trying to make the economy work—in those areas and aspects where reasonable analysis and the settled opinion of an adequate majority indicate that laissez faire is impossible and that some kind of social regulation or planning or enterprise (not necessarily of the federal government) is necessary—they would thereby very likely most effectively maintain the broadest and most vigorous areas of private initiative and free enterprise possible. Similarly, if those who most admire the possibilities of socially regulated, planned or operated economic activities joined positively and loyally in making the properly indicated areas and activities of free economic effort work as well as possible, then their favored public regulating and planning and enterprising would have the maximum chance to work well where it ought to. And if all this, then the common good and the good personal lives of men and women might conceivably rise over the clouds of blinding partisanship and blinding self-regard as goals which an encouraged people could more frequently see.

Authors Authority Debate

THE PLAN for an American Authors Authority which Harry L. Binsse described at some length in these pages two weeks ago has now undergone some scrutiny in public debate. Besides those writers who favor James M. Cain's Hollywood-born plan of a national copyright pool, there are two differing groups. The first of these includes a number of eminently successful authors of assured position who remain content with the status quo and confident that their well-tried liter-

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ary agents will protect their due share of reprint, digest and book club fees. Other writers, more conscious of professional responsibilities, are as individuals—notably James T. Farrell—or in conjunction with the "American Writers Association," opposing the Cain plan vigorously.

The Cain forces charge that Elmer Rice, head of the over-all Authors League, and his immediate associates, have been deliberately postponing consideration of his plan by the constituent Authors Guild (which with the Dramatists Guild, the Screen Writers Guild and the Radio Writers Guild must approve the plan in order for the Authors League to endorse it). Accordingly an "Action Committee" of the Authors Guild called a meeting, October 21, to promote the plan. The press reports that the extraordinary total of 600 "writers" gathered to cheer Mr. Cain and hiss Mr. Farrell. There can be no denying the Stalinist and other pressure backing up in favor of the Cain proposal.

There are many disquieting thoughts suggested by the creation of this powerful "authority" headed by five men, perhaps few more disturbing than the fate of those who would find themselves outside the pale of centralized copyright protection, legal and legislative representation and social security. But there are two things about Mr. Cain's presentation which are of the most dubious cast. How can he pose as the ardent champion of a group of people for whose intelligence he repeatedly and openly expresses such contempt? Examples were plentiful in our previous article, and in a recent broadcast Mr. Cain asserted that, unlike sensible Verdi and Shaw, "discussion of literature in its economic aspects . . . is below three-quarters of American writers." More ominous is the ease with which he dismisses express anxieties as to the threat to freedom of thought and expression embodied in a national, centralized writers authority. Simply to dub such fears as "silly," to say to a writer that there is no danger of repression because the organization's interest is not in what you say but simply in "what you get for it," or to brand criticism of his scheme as totalitarian as a "campaign against the right of a writer to say what he thinks," hardly inspires confidence. Any such plan should be evaluated more on its own merit than on the tactics of the men who propose it. But the combination of the top-heavy plan itself and the strange character of Mr. Cain's predilections about being his brother's keeper is overpowering.

German Chapter

ANOTHER phase of German history appears to be completed, and again, dramatically. There were the hangings and the Goering suicide at Nuremberg, and then quickly, the Berlin vote. In the municipal elections, we are told that the Socialist Unity Party, the instrument of the Russians, received the chilling, bare total of 405,992 votes. The Social Democrats, whom Stalin's men have been so vigorously trying to insult and absorb, won 999,170. The Christian Democratic Union, much smaller, still outclassed the Socialist Unity Party, taking 454,202 votes, and the Liberal Democrats counted 192,527.

It would be vainly optimistic to hope that the Russian communist drive to possess Germany has been shown, by the Berlin election (and also by the Landtag elections in the totally Russian controlled eastern German states which didn't turn out so well for Russia) to have failed and been abandoned. But the communists will have to work out a new line and a new technique. Perhaps the necessity for a period of re-thinking is reflected in the peaceful speeches the Soviet leader and his foreign secretary, Molotov, have recently uttered. In Germany, under western eyes, there was perhaps a too great and unrealistic compromise with decadent, bourgeois liberties. Fanning nationalisms all along eastern Europe turned out a policy of running into objective contradictions, when they had to placate Poland and Germany at one and the same time. Such errors can be corrected in many ways and we have no doubt that the work has begun. Germany is not in an enviable spot.

We hope, at least, that the Russian pro-consuls noticed, after the suicide of Goering, the quite notably down to earth observation of General Arnold of the Army Air Forces: "He was very dramatic and always tried to do the unexpected. The average German does not want to be hung."

More Photographs

THE PHOTOGRAPHS are being shown in the Metropolitan Museum in New York where I saw them; presently they will be shown in museums all over the country. They are "before-and-after" pictures, but not of the fat girl who becomes thin or of the thin girl who gets a figure; they are photographs of Italian buildings before and after we bombed them. They are on the walls of museums in America so that the American people may look at them, and give a million and a half dollars to the American Committee for the Restoration of Italian Monuments.*

So we are at it again. There is a war that has taken place and now we are picking up the pieces again. It is like a house; there is always this mess strewn all over the house, and it is the children and the dishes that have to be taken care of; it is what happens in the house every day that has to be taken care of today and not tomorrow; but now, it is like a house after a marriage or a death; you look at the house, you go through the rooms of the house, and there are all the dishes and

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glasses all over everywhere after the wedding, or there are the too many flowers, the too heavy odor of flowers. You go through the rooms of the house and all the system that kept the children under control, that swept the dust every day, everything that regulated the daily life of the house has broken down and must be invented and planned again—after the marriage, after the death. It is like a house when something has happened that has changed everything in it and you have to decide to manage with whatever is left; the photographs, then, are of the girl who has gone to live in another house, in another city, or of whoever it was who died—and there is this moment when you have to start all over again. That is the way it is after a war.

For the Italians, for instance, that is why they are so very tired. They look at their country—at their house of many rooms—and there were all the deaths, of course, and the marriages always, whether there is war or not; they look at all their cities and they do not need these photographs in the Metropolitan Museum to see that the Ponte S. Trinita in Florence is down, the church of Santa Chiara in Naples roofless and burned out, the Campo Santo in Pisa roofless, or to remember what happened to San Lorenzo in Rome, or to know that everywhere the bombs fell there are these rooms of their house that are in ruins.

The Italians are tired, but they are doing what they can to rebuild or restore these buildings which are destroyed or damaged. They are spending all the money they can spare from the business of living in order to do what they can before it becomes too late to save what still can be saved. They have a government, which is only just beginning to be a government, and finances that are not finances at all, but the government is spending one billion and a half lire on restoration work and that must be hard to get no matter what it means in dollars. The Italians are trying very hard to save what can be saved, but when Americans all over America look at these photographs of what has been destroyed, and of what can be saved, they will not think of what the Italians are doing, but of what Americans can do.

Because there is this beauty in the world and it is indivisible; there is this beauty in the world which a war has destroyed, and the sorrow for this loss is the sorrow of anyone anywhere who has ever known it; there is this precariously surviving beauty threatened now—the façade of the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini leans forward 18 inches—and everyone all over the world will wish to protect this endangered beauty of stone and paint from the rain, the wind, the sun. There are the broken pieces of stone from the tombs, from the vaulted ceilings, from the statues, and everyone, no matter in what country, would wish to be in Italy now with the skill to join them together again; in a heap, there are these fragments of the walls with the frescoes painted on them, and everyone everywhere, who saw them when they were erect, would wish to raise them again. There is so much to be done, so much that can never be done—so much that has been done which can never can be undone. Americans looking at these photographs will wish to do what they still can do.

All they can do is to send money to the address in the footnote. That is all they can do. They can look at the photographs and say this is what the war did, and they can go a little further and say this is what American bombing (pin-point, selective bombing) did to these Italian buildings. They can say, as Mr. Archibald MacLeish said at the New York opening of this exhibition, that it was all the fault of the Germans and that if the destruction was as small as it is, that was due directly to the measures adopted by our Air Force and ground forces in conjunction with other branches of our Government, at the specific command of General Eisenhower.

They can say, indeed, that we had a Committee for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in War Areas "which worked for two years mapping cities and sites in Europe and Asia, listing the monuments and works of art that might be endangered." This Committee explained to the bombers just where all these monuments were situated which now in these photographs we see destroyed. They can say also that no member of the Committee is known to have resigned in protest after they were destroyed. They can say that this is the way things are in a war; intellectuals always list the monuments which the armies destroy—they look on and lament, but not loudly enough to have the armies turn them out of their jobs and send them home.

But when Americans have made whatever comment they want to make on the conformism of committees in wartime, they still have to turn to committees when it is time to pick up the pieces. There is no use being sour about it. These buildings, these monuments, are our buildings, our monuments, many of which we have destroyed, some of which we still can save. That is all it is possible to think about when you look at the photographs of the ruins, light and dark under the Italian sky.

C. G. PAULDING.

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*The American Committee for the Restoration of Italian Monuments, Inc., is conducting a national campaign to raise $1,500,000 for the salvage and repair of a few great masterpieces of Italian architecture that were damaged by the war. It is showing an exhibition called "War's Toll of Italian Art" of photographs in a great number of American cities. Contributions may be sent to Mr. Robert Lehman, Treasurer, 1 William Street, New York 4, N. Y. In the opinion of general counsel to the Committee contributions are deductible for income tax purposes.

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The Estrada Incident

A Christian democrat journal is suppressed in Argentina

George P. Doherty

PADRE AGUSTÍN LUCHÍA PUIG was parish priest of St. Martin de Tours in Buenos Aires and well-known in his country as a radio speaker, lecturer, preacher, and writer. He is a young man, not over 30. Very soon after his graduation from the seminary, he began writing articles for the one or two Argentine magazines, of very limited circulation, which at any time could be found presenting the Christian democratic point of view. But, although individual magazines died and were supplanted, all were designed for intellectuals, and their circulations varied between two or three hundred and as many thousand. It distressed Padre Augustín to realize that neither the magazines nor the ideas they represented were taking vigorous root in the Catholic soil of Argentina. He felt deeply that something had to be done to take the plants out of the hothouse and make them grow, as good seed, among the cockle of indifference—if one regarded the Catholic proletariat—or the cockle of exaggerated nationalism if one considered the bulk of the Catholic clergy and middle classes.

With something like this in mind, Padre Agustín encouraged a group of about two dozen young Argentine men and women to form, five years ago, the Agrupacíon de Estudios José Manuel Estrada. This was a study group on political questions, and it chose the name of one of the most distinguished Catholic political and intellectual leaders of nineteenth century Argentina. José Manuel Estrada was not just nominally Catholic; he was actively and integrally so, and at the same time he was a democrat. This combination astounded Argentines during his lifetime, when democrats were almost universally sceptics, freemasons and anti-clerical, and it has always since enormously inspired the small group of Argentine Catholics who, like Pope Pius XII, have believed that the most appropriate society for the modern world is one which is at once Christian and democratic.

The little study group flourished, its membership increased. Finally, late in 1945, the group, still inspired by Padre Agustín and the memory of Estrada, decided to try to publish a newspaper which would refuse to water down the political message of Christian Democracy, would maintain a high standard of intellectuality, and at the same time would reach many more Argentines than any of its predecessors had ever reached before. The group did not hesitate to give the newspaper the name under which its studies and lectures had prospered. On January 25, 1946, the first weekly issue of *Estrada* appeared, in eight pages, the format essentially that of the standard French weekly newspaper.

Nearly all the articles were signed. Some of the contributors were distinguished, not just in Argentina but in the world. Besides Bishop de Andrea and many other Argentines, there were some of the very greatest Catholic political writers of other nations—Maritain, for example, and Don Sturzo, Père Charles, S.J., and Père Ducatillon, O.P. In one issue a translation of an article by Cardinal Spellman appeared. Later in the present article a summary of the contents of the published issues of *Estrada* will be attempted. At the moment it is only necessary to say that, first, the editors and contributors of *Estrada* were, we are told, all practicing Catholics in good Church standing. This typically is not true of the nationalist journals in Argentina, on which Catholics often collaborate with totalitarian unbelievers of the Charles Maurras genre. And, second, the newspaper dealt with politics exclusively and not specifically with religious doctrine. About half the contents dealt with philosophical questions of politics in the modern world and half with concrete political issues in Argentina. Since the first five weekly issues of *Estrada* appeared before the Argentine Presidential election of February 24, those issues contained a great many articles about the election. *Estrada* opposed Perón and actively supported Dr. Tamborini, the candidate of the Democratic Union. Because the Argentine Catholic clergy and most of the articulate laity, speaking through the nationalist press and certain organizations, were overwhelmingly pro-Perón, this might suggest that *Estrada* was founded to assist Dr. Tamborini's campaign, but the philosophical tone of the newspaper raised it above the level of a campaign vehicle, and after the election it continued to appear, on March 1 and March 8, even after Perón's victory was conceded. When the seventh issue appeared, on March 8, *Estrada's* circula-

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tion had risen to 30,000, a remarkable figure when one considers the quality of its subject matter and the circulations of American journals comparable in level such as THE COMMONWEAL, *America,* the *New Republic* or the *Nation,* the largest of which sells a mere 42,000 copies in a country with ten times the population of Argentina.

The seventh issue contained no hint of discouragement at the election results, rather a spirited determination to lead Argentine Catholics along the same political road of freedom and democracy which the Christian Democrats in Europe are now following. But this determination did not reckon with the Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires.

★

Just after publication of the seventh issue there appeared in the official organ of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires the following brief notice (translated):

> By order of His Eminence I communicate the following: The reading of the periodical *Estrada* is prohibited; those who read it are guilty of sin, a sin which is reserved in this Archdiocese.
>
> (*Signed*) MARIANO NUÑEZ MENDOZA,
> *Secretary of the Chancery.*

The *Revista Ecclesiastica* is read by few Argentines except the clergy, but wide circulation was given the decree when priests in many (perhaps all) parishes read it at Sunday Mass.

According to Canon Law, a reserved sin is one absolution for which can be granted only with the permission of the Pope or the ordinary of the diocese. Certain grave crimes are in this category in all parts of the world. Any sin may be so reserved by any individual bishop. For a bishop to do so publicly has the effect of emphasizing the gravity of the sin. In the New York Archdiocese at the present time there are no such specially reserved sins, nor have there been any for a long time. A priest of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires tells us that, prior to the *Estrada* incident, the ecclesiastical authorities there had not declared a sin reserved for over forty years.

This heavy condemnation astonished the *Estrada* group. A staff meeting was held immediately, and two of the members were asked to go to the Chancery and seek an explanation—if possible, to obtain a revocation. When these two discussed the decree with priests of the Chancery, the priests said that Cardinal Copello had not authorized any explanation; when they requested to discuss it with the Cardinal they were refused an audience.

The staff met again. In deep discouragement—and not a little bewildered—they decided to put no burden on the consciences of Argentine Catholics by continuing publication. In mid-March they published a notice of suspension of publication in two great Buenos Aires dailies, *La Nación* and *El Mundo,* which, translated, reads:

> In view of the decree which appeared in *Revista Ecclesiastica* (No. 561 of the current year, p. 170) which says [there follows the text quoted above] the Editors of *Estrada,* a non-confessional periodical, unaware of the determining reasons for the mentioned sanction placed on their readers in the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, advise that, in order to avoid spiritual harm to the readers and despite the fact that the Editors themselves are affected morally and materially, they have decided to suspend publication and to seek with due respect from the competent authority the removal of the said prohibition.
>
> (*Signed*) THE EDITORS.

Shortly after the suspension, as if to stop up the spring of the movement and to impede *Estrada's* revival under another name, Padre Agustín was ordered by his superiors to remove to Chile, where he is now, in a monastery of his Order, the Augustinians of the Assumption.

The Cardinal's condemnation of *Estrada* would prompt many good Catholics to ask: what heresy or suggestion of heresy did *Estrada* contain, to persuade the Cardinal to silence (in effect) the leaders of the Christian Democratic movement in Argentina? Whatever his personal political predilections may be, the Cardinal must have been reluctant to force *Estrada* to suspend publication in view of the Holy Father's Christmas message of 1945 and the evident truth that Christian democratic movements, and no others now led by Catholics, alone offer any hope at all for a new Christendom.

★

In an effort to answer this question I obtained a complete set of the seven issues of *Estrada,* nearly every word of which I have read. It appears that every article in the seven issues is political. If there is heresy, it certainly is subtle enough to escape a layman's eye. To my knowledge, it also escaped detection by an Argentine priest of exceptional education and intelligence who read every issue. In these circumstances, the bewilderment of the Argentine editors, unable to obtain one word of explanation from the Cardinal, becomes quite readily understandable.

I also asked the same Argentine priest, who is not identified with *Estrada* or with any Christian Democratic movement and is in excellent standing with the Chancery, whether the Cardinal or any other responsible person had ever to his knowledge privately charged *Estrada* with heresy. The answer was no.

What, then, did *Estrada* say in its seven issues?

(1) It sponsored "democracy inspired by Christianity." But it was not the organ of any

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party—rather the servant of an ideal, the ideal of the dignity of the human person; of a government chosen by and responsible to the people; of civil liberties, equal justice, equal access to truth through education.

(2) It opposed continuation of Perón's dictatorial régime—partly because "the political liberty which the exposition and diffusion of the faith requires sets us against all dictatorships." The Perón Government was referred to repeatedly as a tyranny. *Estrada* called for a return to the democratic Constitution of 1853, almost incessantly nullified since the 1930 Revolution, but never repealed. This Constitution, the Editors held, derived its postulates from Thomism. They liked to refer to the fact that it had been first—and perhaps most eloquently—defended by a young monk, Fray Mamerto Esquiú.

Specifically, *Estrada* condemned the Government's policy of operating all the Argentine universities as though they were divisions of a State Propaganda Department instead of free institutions. It denied Perón's postulate that "war is an inevitable biological phenomenon," and condemned his policy of prolonged military training beginning in boyhood. It was shocked by the corollary police violence which the Government practiced at home against dissenters.

Estrada urged full participation in the Pan American system as a duty of the Argentine nation and decried isolationism, which has been as chronic a disease in Argentina as it was in the United States before the war. It accused Perón of forcing a sharp general rise in wages without attempting to moderate the resultant monetary inflation; thus his labor policy was described as demagogic rather than constructive. Finally *Estrada* accused Perón of having agitated the class struggle in Argentina and protested the Government's closing of the Catholic newspapers, *La Verdad* of Junín and *La Acción* of Parana.

(3) It held that "the forces of liberty, democracy and justice have triumphed" in the war. But the task of educating the world to these ideals is a huge one in Argentina as elsewhere. *Estrada* dedicated itself to this task.

(4) It upheld the social and economic encyclicals, e.g., the rights of workers to free collective bargaining, healthful working conditions, a living wage, etc.

(5) It condemned anti-Semitism.

Estrada scarcely had time to say more than this.

It would be natural to suspect this summary of being incomplete if we did not also list certain things which *Estrada* did not say. It did not praise or defend the rôle of the Soviet Union since the end of the war (it sharply attacked Russia's Baltic action). It did not attack capital in Argentina, or propose any economic revolution.

Few laymen are competent judges of heresy. But if one compares subject matter, it seems fair to say that if it is sinful to read *Estrada* it is also sinful to read THE COMMONWEAL and *America,* and *L'Aube* in France, and probably also *Blackfriars.*

For one who has been in Argentina, the condemnation of *Estrada* is apt to bruise the mind with shocking memories. I remember the five or six times I saw youths on the street or in the subway wearing the lapel button of Acción Catolica Argentina and ostentatiously carrying copies of *Clarinada. Clarinada* is an anti-Semitic sheet which competed in vulgarity, hatred and abuse of truth with *Der Stuermer.* It was edited by a Catholic, or pseudo-Catholic, who was also a professor at the Colegio Nacional de Sarmiento. In one of the issues of *Estrada* there is a moving account by a student of how this man persecuted Jews unable to avoid his classes; it did not matter to him, it of course should not have mattered, that some of these Jews also were Catholics.

It would be interesting to have *Clarinada* examined for heresy. There have been other books and magazines published in Argentina in the last fifteen years by Catholics or men writing as Catholics, full of hatred, full of the exaltation of war and the State, bitter in their contempt for democracy and freedom and for all political theories which assign an active, responsible rôle to the people. Some of these books bore the *"con las licensias necesarias."* It would be interesting to have a sample of these books and articles reexamined for heresy.

The same Argentine Catholic priest reported that "large numbers of Catholics throughout the country were unsettled by the controversy, which could have become serious if the editors had insisted on continuing to publish."

★

What were the Cardinal's reasons? Since he has never announced them, the answer is in the field of gossip or, at best, intelligent speculation. We report the views of the Argentine priest: "My impression is that the Curia (Chancery) acted either on request of the Government or in fear of Government intervention. These were Catholics who were so writing, they were being read in large numbers by Catholics, and they were doing the Government harm." (That is, the same kind of harm that the Truman Administration is now suffering when people criticize its handling of the meat problem.) "There is also a theory that a group of nationalistic young clergymen surrounding the Cardinal persuaded him to take steps. This I am less inclined to believe."

Neither theory suggests heresy, or that truth was endangered. Both suggest that the Church was being used to serve political ends, a usage

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which always, of course, imperils her own ends.

In an article which appeared in *Estrada,* Père Ducatillon remarked that in at least one important and purely Christian respect modern Western civilization has progressed from the Middle Ages: the absolutely necessary distinction between the temporal and spiritual powers is clearly drawn now. In the Middle Ages the State was quite generally considered an instrument of the Church; but, in practice, the State often succeeded in making the Church its instrument.

★

What are the issues raised by the closing of *Estrada?* They are, it seems to me, mainly these:

(1) If *Estrada* had published some heresy, Cardinal Copello should have taken the trouble to explain the heresy to the Catholics of Buenos Aires.

The Cardinal's designation of heresy, had he made one, would very likely have produced an immediate, public retraction by the Editors of *Estrada,* whose obedience, it must be remembered, led them to suspend publication following the declaration of the reserved sin.

The opportunity to retract the heresy, if heresy there was, would have avoided the wrecking, the moral disaster, of an extraordinarily successful enterprise in the field of Catholic journalism and Catholic action. The *Estrada* collaborators were young men and women of talent and good will. In a sense they were the intellectual élite of the Argentine laity, or a large part of that élite. Other parts of the élite, of comparable literary talent, have been largely employed in the service of an exaggerated, anti-democratic nationalism.

For many years modern Popes have struggled to activate an inert laity—not in the way Hitler activated his nazis, rather as the priests of Antigonish activated their Catholic fishermen. Not as soldiers, but as creative workers. The task is not an easy one. In Argentina Cardinal Copello has fired a heavy shell into his own ranks.

It is scarcely necessary to refer also to the fact that the Cardinal's failure to explain inevitably confused many Argentine Catholics and non-Catholics about what is the essence of Catholic truth, and created uncertainty in their minds about the Church's rôle in modern society and the relation of its spiritual authority to the State's temporal authority.

(2) If *Estrada* in fact contained no heresy, a much graver issue is raised. In that case Cardinal Copello was guilty of a grievous abuse of his authority as a bishop. It would be very difficult for an abuse of this kind to occur without such secrecy, such a suppression of facts and reasons, as have characterized the *Estrada* incident. But when such an abuse does occur, Catholics not just of that diocese but throughout the world have a solemn duty to expose and resist it. This is no less than the defense of our Faith, the integrity of which is directly threatened if sins are decreed at the caprice or convenience of governments.

London Commentary

J. L. BENVENISTI

WE HAVE at this writing just emerged from the nine days wonder of the Squatters Campaign, which your newspapers may possibly have described to you. The facts are simple. Some blocks of relatively expensive apartments which had just been de-requisitioned were standing temporarily unoccupied, and the Communist Party organized some hundreds of families who were on the waiting list for homes to seize them. The Squatters have now been turned out, and it is fashionable to say that the Communist Party has made a fool of itself.

This to some extent is true, for the ethics of the whole business are too patent to be missed. If you can seize a building that happens to be temporarily empty because the overworked building force has not been immediately able to get round to recondition it, then you can also walk into a butcher's shop and take a leg of mutton, although that leg of mutton is really somebody else's ration. That is as obvious to everybody over here as is the fact that the Communist Party doesn't care two straws for the sufferings of homeless people, and that the whole maneuvre attempted to discredit the Labor Government.

However, the issue is not really quite as simple as that, for the very futility of this stunt is rather tending to bedevil people's minds. Since this kind of thing obviously has nothing more than a mild nuisance value, and since this is very much on a par with the general tactics which the Communists are pursuing here, there is a great danger that people will write down Communism as a piece of ineptitude and regard the Communist Party as a clumsy and ineffective organization incapable of becoming a serious threat to anybody.

Such a result would be very unfortunate, but I am afraid the tendency is very widespread both here and in America, and nowhere is it more in evidence than in certain recent utterances of Mr. Wallace, concerning which I have one or two observations to make.

My first complaint against Mr. Wallace is on account of his rudeness to Marshal Stalin—a curious offense in one who professes to be concerned for a better understanding with Russia, but one of which Mr. Wallace has undoubtedly been guilty. I say that Mr. Wallace has been rude to Marshal Stalin because I have always

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been taught that it is rude to contradict people, which is precisely what Mr. Wallace does. For instance, in his letter of last June to Mr. Truman, Mr. Wallace writes: "The slogan that Communism and Capitalism cannot continue to exist in the same world is pure propaganda." He may be quite right, but it is, or at any rate was at the time Mr. Wallace wrote these words, Stalin's propaganda.

Mr. Wallace is probably quite unaware of this, because until recently he has no doubt been too busy to give much attention to these matters. I can only hope that now he has been relieved of the burden of his office as Secretary of Commerce, he will find time to walk into any Communist bookshop, lay out half a dollar or possibly a dollar, and take a handful of Stalin's writings home to bed with him. I recommend in particular Stalin's "Foundations of Leninism." From this he will see quite clearly that Stalin's avowed object is world revolution, and nothing but world revolution, that the end-all and be-all of his whole existence and career is the violent destruction of the capitalist system. In the circumstances it seems to me to be only common courtesy to take him at his word and believe what he says.

The real trouble with Mr. Wallace, however, seems to be that he shows little sign of ever having read Karl Marx, or, if he has done so, he has not done it with much assiduity, and the sooner he remedies that defect the better for everybody. It may seem a cruel penance to lay upon an honest and courageous man, to condemn him to immerse himself in that turgid and tautologous author, but I am afraid that there is nothing else that will meet the case. There seems no other way of driving into Mr. Wallace's head that Communism is really a great deal more than (to use his own description) "a rival form of economic and political organization."

I daresay that from the American side this does appear to be its most essential and characteristic feature. I suppose large sections of American opinion do at first feel the shock of the onset of Communist ideas as a threat to their property rights, to their businesses, and so on, and so as something pertaining to the economic field. But that is not how the Russians feel about it. Neither Stalin nor anybody else is going to make a world revolution so that Americans instead of buying their hot dogs from privately-owned hot dog stands will buy them instead from the nationally-owned Hot Dog Trust. The Russians are proceeding from certain philosophical first principles in which considerations of economic and political organization are secondary and even almost adventitious matters. They are proceeding from the principles of dialectical materialism, which looks upon life as a perpetual process of change, marked by recurrent, inevitable and inevitably violent conflicts between that which is dying and that which is being born, a process which human wills can profitably expedite by chipping in at the right moment. In other words, the whole *raison d'être* of Communism lies not so much in the fact that it has, or professes to have, certain constructive ideas which happen to differ somewhat from our own, but that it is quite avowedly a destructive agency which is both destined and determined to burst asunder the civilization of which, for better or worse, we are all of us a part.

In these circumstances Communism must either completely stultify itself and deny its own first principles, or any idea of a permanent cooperation between Capitalism and Communism that is based on a mere "agreement to differ" becomes automatically unthinkable. This, as I shall show later, is not quite such a despairing conclusion as it sounds, but it is nevertheless an inescapable one. You can agree to differ with a man who thinks the earth is flat, you cannot permanently agree to differ with a man whose avowed intention it is to cut your throat.

At this point, I can see that I shall have to counter two objections. One is that Stalin abandoned all ideas of world revolution before his quarrel with Trotsky, and that the quarrel with Trotsky arose because the latter would not follow his example. The other is Stalin's express statement in the interview with Alexander Werth that he believes in "the possibility of friendly and lasting cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Western Democracies, in spite of the existence of ideological differences."

As far as the Trotsky argument is concerned, I can only say that this popular version of the Stalin-Trotsky quarrel, which represents Trotsky as the revolutionary extremist and Stalin as the moderate and sensible realist, is the world's best bedtime story. It is quite true that Trotsky wanted world revolution, it is quite untrue that Stalin didn't want it. The quarrel, in so far as it was anything but the clash between two ambitious and unscrupulous personalities, and had no ideological basis at all, was not a quarrel about aim but about method. Trotsky believed that Russia could not build up a Socialist society in isolation. Stalin held the opposite view, but he never for one moment held that the building up of a Socialist state in Russia was an end in itself. It was merely the means to an ultimate end.

"The revolution in the victorious country," he writes in "Foundations of Leninism," to which I have referred above (and which is actually described in the official Communist history as "an effective contribution to the ideological defeat of Trotskyism"), "must regard itself not as a self-sufficient entity but as an aid, as a means of hastening the victory of the proletariat in other coun-

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tries." Whatever, therefore, distinguished Stalin from Trotsky, it was certainly not the moderation of his aims.

The other objection can also be fairly easily disposed of. It is quite true that Stalin made the statement which I have already quoted, but it does not follow that because we should take Stalin's reasoned philosophical publications at their face value, as I most certainly think we should, we are therefore obliged to take *au pied de la lettre* a press declaration made from obvious grounds of political expediency. Besides the statement about cooperation with the democracies, Stalin in the same interview also asserted that the accusation that the policy of the Communist Parties of western Europe was dictated by Moscow was "an absurdity borrowed from the bankrupt arsenal of Hitler and Goebbels." This statement was actually made within a few weeks of the publication of the Canadian Royal Commission's report on espionage in Canada, in which letter after letter was published showing how completely the Canadian Labor Progressive Party was acting under Moscow's orders. After that revelation, anybody who can still believe that the Communist Parties of western Europe or any other country are not directed by Moscow, is capable of believing anything — and that is a pretty good yardstick to measure the rest of the interview.

★

It is, on the whole, not surprising that Mr. Wallace, being so hopelessly at sea on all these matters, should also be at sea on another, namely on the subject of British imperialism—because it is really his ignorance of Communist thought that is at the bottom of both blunders. I am not going to accuse a person of Mr. Wallace's intelligence of merely parroting what the Russians say, but he is nevertheless in his talk about British imperialism repeating a Russian charge without apparently being aware that he and the Russians mean two entirely different things.

I have no doubt that what Mr. Wallace has in mind is that we still have a few scattered outposts here and there where we are desperately trying to stave off utter chaos in the Near East and other places, and to protect the vital trade routes by which we live. But that is not what the Russians have in mind at all.

The word "imperialism" in the Communist jargon has a definite technical meaning, and what imperialism means to the Communist can be stated very simply. It means "lending foreigners money." The Communist theory is that at a certain stage free capitalism develops into monopoly capitalism, and that as a result of this, capital in the developed countries is compelled to wander abroad and carry on its work of "exploitation" away from home. In this way the "imperialist" stage of capitalism is reached, and that is the essence of what the Communists mean when they use the word. It is something that turns wholly on the export of capital—an activity which at the moment is the one thing which the British are perfectly incapable of engaging in, because they have not got any capital to export.

Why the Russians should proclaim us guilty of this alleged crime is a matter that is best known to the Russian government, but in repeating the charge Mr. Wallace is not merely making a fool of himself but laying up considerable embarrassment for himself in the future. For although Britain is at the moment not conforming to the imperialist pattern in the Marxist-Leninist sense of the word, America is herself tending to do that very thing. The opening-up of foreign fields for American capital abroad is quite obviously a major consideration of Mr. Byrnes's policy—and a jolly good job, too. Personally, I am all in favor of this kind of imperialism, if I cannot get anything better. I have frequently stated my views in this journal of the unsoundness of the principles under which, in the modern world, the export of capital takes place, but capital exported under unsound conditions is a great deal better than no capital at all, and the activity which Mr. Byrnes is seeking to propagate is one which plays a determining part in the material advance of the human race.

That, however, does not alter the fact that it is the Americans and not the British who happen at the moment to have equipped themselves with all the traditional stage properties and who are going through all the gestures of the imperialist bogey-man. The whole set-up is there on view for everybody to see—great wealth seeking an outlet and in the background airplane carriers, atomic bombs and the rest of it. For my own part, and I am pretty typical of British opinion, I look upon it as inconceivable that this force should ever be basely or oppressively used. But the fact remains that it is there, and if I were a good little Communist, brought up in the Communist Sunday Schools, and were asked to point to an example of that very imperialism which my textbooks had described, it is surely obvious where I would look for it. That being so, will not Mr. Wallace look rather foolish when some tactical consideration causes Moscow to lay off the British and beam the whole of its concentrated obliquy on America?

Mr. Wallace's defamation of Britain, however, is not a matter of world-shaking importance. His shortcomings in the interpretation of Russian aims and of the Russian mind is a matter of much greater moment. Despite what I have said in this article, I do not look upon a clash between Russia and the west as by any means inevitable, but it seems to me that the first thing

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we have to do if we are to achieve a happier relationship with Russia is to try and study what is really going on inside Russian heads. I certainly believe that the first condition of a better understanding is an attempt on our part to understand. I certainly don't think that we shall get anywhere by ignoring the convictions which Russian Communists have themselves proclaimed for all the world to hear, and I certainly don't think the Russians will be flattered if we speak and write as though those convictions had already been betrayed.

Communications

ART AND THE ANTHOLOGIST

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In his article, "Art and the Anthologist" (printed in your issue of September 27, 1946), Mr. Henry Rago refers to my essay, "The Fate of Writing in America." However, his remarks are based on either a misunderstanding or a mis-representation of what I really wrote. In various discussions which I had prior to writing this essay, I observed that a number of people looked at the problems I was dealing with in terms of hope and consolation, or else of melancholy and pessimism. This is the same approach which many have towards more central political problems of the day. Mr. Rago seems to impute to me his own approach. He says that "there is little solace" in my analysis, that I present "some melancholy statistics," and that I find "consolation" because I point out that when one is dealing in problems of a mass market in books, one then comes face to face with the masses. This false imputation seems to permit Mr. Rago then to assert that I "take such a happy view of the fate of anything left to mass-judgment, because he seems to think within a *mystique* which allows a number of things to work themselves out 'dialectically' through the masses." All of this falsifies my views. When critics stress a polarization of hope and pessimism in a discussion of objective problems the way Mr. Rago does, they strongly suggest that they themselves are seeking some kind of consolation. They then seem to project their own success or failure onto those whom they criticise. This seems to be the case with Mr. Rago. The crux of his misrepresentation lies in what I have quoted above concerning a mass *mystique*. Mr. Rago has absolutely no ground in any of my writings for imputing to me a formal faith in "dialectics." The entire question of "faith" in the masses is not directly based on Hegelian formulations. It is based on a set of assumptions concerning the capacities of human beings.

In my essay, I pointed out that in considering questions of taste in publishing, there is a reciprocal relationship which involves the audience as well as the publisher and others connected with the writing and publishing of books. The audience imposes its limit on what can be done. This is the sense in which I pointed out that when we have mass-scale production, you come face-to-face with the masses. I further based my analysis on the assertion that most of the contemporary and commercialized books and motion pictures do not feed the real needs of masses of people. I wrote: "The war has given the masses of the world an education which is almost unparalleled in history. The conclusions concerning this education are far from drawn. But the increased awareness of serious problems existent in the world is more clear than it ever was. With this the need for greater knowledge, and hence for greater culture, has been touched. If you once touch this sleeping need in masses of people the consequences are far from predictable. In creating the conditions of communication which make the creation of a mass democratic culture practical, capitalist society has created a problem which it cannot ultimately solve." Clearly, this is different from what Mr. Rago attributes to me.

Further, he also declares that when I write of the needs of masses of people for greater culture and greater knowledge, I am speaking only of political and sexual needs. This is invidious. I stress in more than one place that consciousness of problems existent in the world today can stir people, and that the production of standardized stereotypes and images of life in movies and cheap novels will not feed these needs. The conception of these needs is generalized in my article. People need to know more and need to feel more, they need to be made more aware of the nature of experience. This is the sense in which I speak of the needs of people. And further, I assert that these factors are involved in the possibility of a quickening of cultural energy. I have more than once ventured the forecast that it is possible for there to be a cultural renaissance in America in the present century.

In my analysis I count on this as a possibility. But after analyzing what I considered to be significant aspects of the present situation in the publishing business, I then stressed the responsibility of the writer. I insisted that the writer can be a conscious and positive person who need not always allow himself to become the prostituted victim of a business culture. I pointed out that there is a difference between the exertion of influence and the gaining of best-seller success. I affirmed that if one has a conception of influence, one regards current developments in publishing differently than if one has merely a conception of success, and equates financial success with influence. The writer must seek actively to help create better conditions for mass receptivity to ideas and art.

Contemporary culture reeks with snobbery. Writers themselves compromise, and then, they "blame" the masses of the people for having poor taste. This attitude often is merely the formula for surrender to the Philistines. When I wrote my essay, I was aware of this. It was one of the reasons why I strongly stressed the reponsibility of the writer. I indicated that the circumstances are such today that he most likely will have to work against the stream. Mr. Rago seems to misunderstand this, to treat it as a matter of empty faith. In turn, he poses as an empirical non-believer. However, Mr. Rago does not cite any facts. Rather, he asserts his own views in an unclear, non-empirical manner.

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Finally, let me insist that these problems cannot be simply resolved into the question of the cheerfulness or the cheerlessness of one's conclusions. And it is fatalism to think in terms of pure spontaneous generation. But the tortured world in which we live is not one of purely accidental spontaneous generation. It is a world in which the conditions of life make various developments possible or not-possible. The conscious rôle of men is all-important in this world. The conscious rôle of writers can be tremendously significant. For that reason, I wrote the following words in the concluding paragraph of my essay: "we have not lived through the *last* change in history. We have not lived through the *last* revolution. Now less than ever should the literary artist surrender to the Philistines and to commerce. The future is more important for writers, for the new generation, than the bombast and glamor which so many now call culture. A half-monopolized culture can only reproduce worn-out and wretched formulas, patch them up with cellophane, and let the press agent do his job. You can saturate humanity with everything, including this sentimentality. Clear and honest work will stand out against this saturated sentimentality. Years ago, Zola boldly proclaimed: 'The truth is on the march.' That is the rôle of the writer—to try and make that truth march."

JAMES T. FARRELL.

"GRAUSTARK AND THE INDIANS"

Notre Dame, Indiana.

TO the Editors: Upon my return from a vacation, I was surprised indeed to read in the issue of August 23 of THE COMMONWEAL the article entitled, "Graustark and the Indians," by Mr. Harry Sylvester. After reading carefully the article, it appears to me that the author is not familiar at all with the political problems of Guatemala; furthermore, he is completely unaware of the historical factors involved.

Not everything pointed out by Mr. Sylvester is untrue. But many wrong details and one-sided statements give an exaggerated picture and a distorted conception of the facts and the persons.

When Mr. Sylvester talks about the hunt after the overthrow of the Ponce régime, he is evidently confused. Those hunted were the National Police and the so-called Liberals, supporters of Ponce and his henchmen, and not the "Guardia Civil." There was no Guardia Civil in Guatemala. The "Guardia Cívica," a particular body created during the emergency was formed by university and high school students, workers and citizens without distinction, and of course the "Guardia Cívica" was on the side of the revolution. The hunting was done to a certain extent to protect the city, because policemen and Liberals who were at large raided the street in Red Cross ambulances in order to terrorize and spread panic.

The author of the article states "with death as the penalty for the second conviction of theft, there was no stealing in Guatemala." I only challenge Mr. Sylvester to show me in the Penal Code the article or articles to which he refers.

It is impossible to overlook the importance of Ubico's régime to Guatemala as the author tries to do, by means of a frivolous psychiatric statement. It would be hard to believe that fantastic story of President Ubico judging the character of his visitors by the shapes of their heads.

When the author mentions the present President of Guatemala, he is confused. Dr. Arévalo is a professor of education and not a professor of philosophy. Mr. Sylvester gives the impression that Dr. Arévalo was a member of the "Junta de Gobierno" instituted after October 20. Actually the members of the Junta were Don Jorge Toriello, Major Arana and Captain Arbenz, but not Dr. Arévalo. Maybe the author does not know that the now Major Arbenz is the Minister of National Defense. Therefore, Dr. Arévalo did not have any official position before his popular election to the Presidency.

Mr. Sylvester says that the Junta was incompetent. To this statement I only have to reply that the Junta fulfilled its promises: the Junta had the task of maintaining order, suppressing the reaction of the Liberals and carrying on the elections. Such plan was completed in its entirety.

To say that the students are against Arévalo's régime is a daring statement. I do not hesitate to admit that there may be some students in the opposition, but the student body as a whole has supported consistently Doctor Arévalo's government policies.

Mr. Sylvester also states that the present government is more friendly to the Church than Ubico's was. At present there have been rumors of strong opposition to the Catholic Church on account of the leftist character of some elements of the present government. The last speech of the President evidences that position. But during Ubico's régime a Concordat was concluded with the Holy See, five Jesuits were allowed for the first time since 1871 to enter the country in order to reorganize the Seminary, the nuns of the "Sainte Famille" were permitted to establish a Catholic school for girls and the Marist Brothers one for boys, the churches destroyed by the earthquake of 1940 were rebuilt with Government help, a Eucharistic Congress took place, the Maryknollers were also permitted to found a mission in Huehuetenango and the Government was then the most tolerant the Church has known since the Liberal Revolution of 1871. Furthermore, there was no law enacted during Ubico's government to limit the number of priests.

In saying that the Spanish priests are generally disliked, Mr. Sylvester echoes a very limited opinion. Their popularity is a fact that can be proved easily. The remark that Spanish priests are very wealthy, and that they can be seen in the Bank of London purchasing hundred dollar denomination traveler checks is not likely true. I learned in 1944 that checks of that denomination were sold to a U. S. citizen for the first time.

In regard to communism, denied entirely by Mr. Sylvester, it might be worth mentioning that the conditions described by the author make the country liable to communistic activity. Maybe the communists are not so well organized as the Congressman from Virginia points out, but it is necessary to be blind to deny the existence of serious communistic tendencies.

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Guatemala needs help, but that help should come from within the country, through better understanding of its problems and less passion on the part of its inhabitants. And the same applies to those interested in Guatemala and living in foreign countries, who should be careful in not being the instruments of local politics, but real friends to bring peace into the land.

LUIS BELTRANENA-VALLADARES

AMERICAN UNCERTAINTIES IN GERMANY

Notre Dame, Ind.

TO the Editors: My congratulations for raising publicly the question: Why has a license not yet been given for the opening of the German Catholic weekly *Michael,* which was one of the most courageous anti-nazi publications until it was closed down by Hitler's régime?

This withholding is particularly surprising if one compares it with the speed with which a former leader of the Hitler Youth, Marin Hieronimi, the author of an anti-religious book and leading contributor to the journal of the Nazi Educator, Krieck, received a license for a publication house in Bonn (British Zone).

I hope that the founder and former editor of *Michael,* Johannes Maassen, will have the opportunity to reopen soon his publication for which many young Catholics are anxiously waiting. And I hope, too, that Secretary Byrnes's Stuttgart speech will hasten the reestablishment of the exchange of books and printed matter with Germany.

How can Germans realize what is going on in the democratic world if they have no opportunity of receiving American publications?

WALDEMAR GURIAN.

Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

TO the Editors: Notre Dame's "Fighting Irish" are kidded in the press for the lack of ordinary names on their team.

Below I list 15 names, five each from Notre Dame, Harvard, Yale. I am sure that the average reader cannot guess the school of many of the players.

1. Barzilauskas
2. Lynch
3. Moravec
4. Fiorentino
5. Urban
6. Drvaric
7. Livingston
8. Booe
9. Prchlich
10. Petrillo
11. Potter
12. Wendall
13. Ferguson
14. Earley
15. Gannon

The answer to this is as follows:

1. Yale
2. Yale
3. Harvard
4. Harvard
5. Notre Dame
6. Harvard
7. Notre Dame
8. Yale
9. Yale
10. Harvard
11. Notre Dame
12. Notre Dame
13. Yale
14. Notre Dame
15. Harvard

GEORGE M. ST. PETER.

The Stage & Screen

Cyrano De Bergerac

FOR ALL children with mothers, for all aunts, expectant nephews, and desperate cousins, I feel it will be tidings that the "white plume" waves again. José Ferrer's production of the Rostand classic should immediately solve the holiday, matinée, and "treat" problem. And it is to be hoped for some time. The show is a good, long, long, splendid business. In the interests of criticism, however, I must say it is also a fascinating one, but for an ulterior reason. And I think this reason can only be formulated in a question: WHAT has Alfred Lunt done to the actors of his time? Even Olivier has not escaped him. And here, in voice, comportment, gesture, gesticulation, crabbed phrasing, punched consonants, and stance, Mr. Ferrer's "Knight of the Nose" is his. There is a difference, however. There is always just sufficient *ham* about Lunt. In adjacent parts—"Marco" in O'Neill's opus, "Mosco" in the Jonson classic—there was consistently a kind of Fairbanks quality about his physical attack. Extremely lithe, one felt he could, without wires, travel the air of the old Guild, chin himself on the chandelier, drop, grin, and come on on cue. Mr. Ferrer could not, I think, accomplish this. I confess I do not understand the intellectuality of his "Cyrano" and therefore cannot truly appreciate it. Theatrically speaking, it does not seem to me possible to draw a subtle romantic out of the most blatantly (honorably) romantic plan ever ever penned. But if Mr. Ferrer has foregone the ham for himself, he has given his designer, Lemuel Ayers, a free hand. And what the offering suffers in dignity from the acting is unquestionably substituted in the dash of the designs. Pictorially the show is stunning, the costumes the loveliest I have seen. Paul Bowles's occasional music seemed to me pleasant, fairly haunting, but here again I must disagree. It seems to me music of the period should have been used, lots of *brio,* and that it should have grounded and pointed the action rather than being merely slipped in. A good number of the lesser actors are choice and, thanks to Melchor Ferrer's direction, their numbers seemed to fit the sets. I feel I should apologize for the speciality of my quibbles. It is honestly necessary to put this down as safe, sane, slow, and only nostalgically strange. (*At the Alvin.*)

The Duchess of Malfi

IN THIS production, the vast disorders of John Webster's Jacobean piece would seem to have been adjusted by W. H. Auden to Elizabeth Bergner's size. And I am not sure the process fits. The doings at the Barrymore seem a little unclear. Regarding script, as far as I can match from memory, a good deal of sub-plot has been cut; other sections removed and refitted; a rather cumulative speech has been written in for the Cardinal's banishment scene (I think foolishly); and I should say incest and pathos have been stressed, plus literature. The results of

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this are, I think, dull and sometimes laughable. Perhaps the most inwardly interesting of all the transitional Elizabethan work, the play has long been cherished for its poetry and for a kind of exhaustion of frenzy exactly matching the moral chaos of its period. Now, historically and theatrically to translate this into current stuff, it seems to me two choices were evident: either to employ the entire original canvas, an expensive although thrilling possibility; or to telescope the business into an intense, stylized miniature, short, implacable and explosive. Neither of these methods were employed by Mr. Auden or George Rylands, the director, but rather a long, slow, luke arrangement with some extras (constantly re-dressed with new beards), some re-written children, and incidental music by Benjamin Britten about which one can only inquire, "incidental to what?" A further carp must explore the pictorial end. As the star is a small woman, it would, I think, have been wise to abandon authenticity and deal in some style of dress and traps which might have assisted her wrestle with the language. It is true that Miss Bergner's conceptions depend always upon an immediacy of charm rather than the serenity of beauty; it is even possible to imagine that this rôle was chosen by her for its prandial extensions (the eating of an apricot being a major plot development). However, weighed as she is by capes, architectural sleeve constructions, and most of all, by a series of pot head-dresses contrived by Miles White, it is unfortunately evident that her essential and certainly special quality cannot penetrate. At one moment a "Tessa"; at another, a "Mary, Queen of Scots"; she is almost always lost, always mistaken.

There are further technical discrepancies which should be examined—the lighting, for instance, is appalling—but I feel these have little relevance as opposed to the central problem. It is interesting, I think, that the question of staging—our whole current emphasis—should be enveloped in a single month of this season. On the one hand, we have Eddie Dowling, showered with encomium on Forty-fifth street for having followed *to the letter* O'Neill's written instructions; on the other, this production where it is entirely impossible to do less than blame the director for all. The director is the modern joker. But until the living playwrights will steadfastly write him out, and until producers will promote him precisely, as the one *wholly* responsible in the matter of revivals, I am afraid he will continue to take all the tricks, else go down with them. (*At the Ethel Barrymore.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Stoops to Folly

STRANGE are the ways of women—in the movies especially. The films under consideration this week show the so-called weaker sex wandering from the norm but not behaving weakly.

The problem of twins is again brought to our attention; this time in an adult thriller. *"The Dark Mirror"* is made particularly interesting through its use of psychology not only to add to the picture's blood-curdling effects, but also as part of the plot. Shortly after the film's start it becomes obvious that one of the twins (both portrayed by Olivia de Havilland in deft performances) is guilty of murder. Since the law (mainly represented by Thomas Mitchell as a detective) cannot decide which of the girls is without alibi, both are freed. And then a friend of theirs (Lew Ayres as a psychologist specializing in twins) asks them to submit to a series of examinations. These tests, of the ink-blot and word-association variety, are fascinating to watch, especially in their connection with the development of the story. Needless to say the suspense rises to new heights when the doctor announces that one of the girls is paranoiac (and doesn't tell us which). Later this sister tries to drive the other crazy. It would be unfair to tell too much of Vladimir Pozmer's story which Nunnally Johnson fashioned into the exciting script used by Director Robert Siodmak to keep you on edge. As a rule, the theater is inclined to display twins as a melodramatic device, but this picture employs the device intelligently and adds a few twists of its own.

If you like your melodrama dressed to the hilt and well acted for the hissing, *"Deception"* is your answer. Henry Blanks has given a flawless production in cast, costumes and sets to this movie based on a play by Louis Verneuil. (While the name of the original play is not mentioned in the credits, the plot's similarity to Verneuil's two-character "Obsession," formerly called "Jealousy," is apparent in spite of the fact that characters have been added.) Under Irving Rapper's skilful direction, Bette Davis, Paul Henreid and Claude Rains emote like everything in the three corners of a triangular love story set in New York's plush musical world. The woman, a composer-pianist, marries a cellist (Henreid in one of his best characterizations) and hopes to build a new life on the lies she tells her jealous husband about her past with the famous composer who was her lover. Miss Davis, who has so often played similar rôles, gives another grade-A portrayal of a bad woman done in by her own deception and false snatching at happiness. We are not surprised when we see her standing on the staircase with revolver in hand and a man's dead body at her feet. It is Mr. Rains, however, who practically steals the show with his portrait of a genius-monster. His diabolic cat-and-mouse game with the helpless woman is absorbing and disgusting to watch. If "Deception" merits attention for its good production (especially in the acting, music and fine orchestral scenes) it also makes news because it's a Bette Davis opus in which a man outdoes Davis in vitriolic meanness.

"Mr. Ace" gives Sylvia Sidney an opportunity to wear some very snazzy clothes. It also seems to be going out of its way to prove that women in politics are an unreliable business. As Margaret Wyndham Chase, who is running for governor of her state, Miss Sydney uses her wiles mainly on Mr. Ace (George Raft), a political boss whose word is power and whose will, though strong at first, finally succumbs to his opponent's attractions. It is not cricket, of course, to judge all congresswomen by the tactics of this Mrs. Chase who believes that "all's fair in love and politics." Nor is it cricket to draw parallels between this picture and real life. What this talky script needs is some sincere political convictions. It aims at

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these in the scene built around a political science professor (nicely played by Roman Bohnen) who tells off Chase and Ace with: "Government is a sacred trust, not to be worn as an adornment, or in the hip pocket like a blackjack." Perhaps this film does women a disservice; anyone seeing it may come to the conclusion that the woman's place really is in the home.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Labor Movement

The AFL Returns to Chicago

IN 1893, the last time it held a convention in Chicago, the AFL had 250,000 members and 7,000 dollars. Most of the delegates traveled on the rods and arrived in town with a lean, hungry look and little else. More recently the AFL returned to Chicago, with 7,150,000 members and total assets of $250,000,000. The delegates appeared well fed, even prosperous. But somewhere between 1893 and 1946 the fire had gone out of them. Even Gompers would have thought it looked and sounded more like a gathering of butter-and-egg salesmen than the annual convention of the leaders of the great American Federation of Labor.

Of the 613 delegates registered there were rarely more than half on the floor. Only a handful bothered to vote for the resolutions, which rolled down from the platform like marbles rolling off a table. It was obvious to everyone that the 15 men who make up the executive council—the Greens, Hutchesons, Tobins, Wolls—had cut and dried everything carefully beforehand. There was one brief flare-up from the little fellows on a vote to increase per capita taxes—quickly squelched. And there was the annual protest of A. Philip Randolph of the Sleeping Car Porters against the continuation of Jim Crow locals—the annual unheeded protest. That was about all in the way of life and vitality.

The most interesting thing that came out of the convention was a rumor that Bill Green, the pink-cheeked, uninspired Santa Claus who heads the Federation, would retire next year in favor of John L. Lewis. (Lewis did not attend, being still laid up with an appendectomy.)

The most discouraging thing that came out of it was the collapse of all AFL support of price controls (except on rent), a collapse that undoubtedly had its effect on President Truman's decision to scrap meat controls. Other discouraging things were: another inaccurate claim that Communists control the CIO; an unashamed, thinly-veiled appeal to employers to do business with the AFL on the ground that it is more "reasonable" than the CIO; a charge that the CIO was responsible for breaking the price line; failure to heed the appeal of a covey of Hollywood stars that the AFL set up a fool-proof arbitration system that would make impossible the crazy kind of jurisdictional warfare that is once again splitting the movie industry, and a number of innocent heads, wide open; refusal to lower immigration bars to Chinese and other "races who cannot be assimilated."

Encouraging things were: the strong anti-Communist position taken; the support of Baruch's atom bomb plan; support of "all out political action in the coming election" with campaign committees in each union; protest of Archbishop Stepinatz's trial and conviction; support of permanent FEPC; refusal to go along with inexcusable attempt by Dan Tobin of Teamsters to cut down further on immigration quotas, particularly in reference to Jews; support of expanded social security and health insurance; admission of the militant National Farm Labor Union to the AFL; urging that federal aid to schools go not exclusively to public, state schools, but to schools, including parochial.

Good News

IRA MOSHER, president of the National Association of Manufacturers, has now come out for guaranteed annual wages, which is very good news. Is this the end of an era in NAM policy, or just the end of Mr. Mosher?

Answers Should Come

THE LABOR movement will welcome the statement on "basic principles of economic justice" recently released over the signature of 122 Catholics, Protestants and Jews—clergy and laymen—and endorsed by the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (which represents the American Bishops), the Federal Council of Churches of Christ and the Synagogue Council of America.

It is fervently to be hoped and prayed that all Catholics, and particularly Catholic employers, will study this statement carefully. Especially recommended are such passages as the following:

". . . The right to private property is limited by moral obligations and is subject to social restrictions for the common good . . ."

"The purposes of economic life, therefore, are: (a) To develop natural resources and human skills for the benefit of mankind. (b) To distribute God's gifts equitably. (c) *To provide useful employment for everyone according to his abilities and needs* under conditions that are in accord with his human diginity as a child of God.

"Stable and full employment cannot be achieved without a proper balance among prices, profits, wages and incomes generally. Wages must be maintained at that level which will most effectively contribute to full employment. In many cases this will mean that wages must be raised above a standard family living wage, which is only the minimum requirement of justice. . . ."

"To make the profit motive the guiding principle in economic life is to violate the order which God Himself has established. *The profit motive, while useful within reasonable limits, must be subordinated to the motive of service for human needs and the dictates of social justice . . .*"

"The function of these free organizations (of workers, farmers, employers and professional people) *must be extended beyond the traditional limits of collective bargaining for self-protection* into an organized system of cooperation for the common good."

After opposing "excessive governmental intervention" the statement nevertheless points out that *"it is the duty of the state to intervene in economic life whenever necessary to protect the rights of individuals and groups* and to aid in the advancement of the general economic welfare . . ."

". . . The government . . . has as its *chief responsibility* the encouragement of a system in which the major economic decisions will be carried out by the organized cooperation of the functional economic groups. . . ."

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After reading this statement, it makes an interesting mental, social and political exercise to think back into the recent past and apply it to various controversial questions such as:

(1) Did Roosevelt and the New Deal go too far or not far enough in their use of economic planning? Did they intervene too much or too little?

(2) Were employer spokesmen right in blasting the Industry Council idea of Phil Murray, CIO president, as a Communist device and an outrageous violation of management prerogatives?

(3) Were they correct in protesting that labor has no right to say anything about prices, profits or the distribution of national income?

(4) Were Walter Reuther and other labor leaders merely demagogues in saying that General Motors *et al.* had an obligation to share their fat war profits generously with labor and the public, so that we might maintain purchasing power and full employment without the runaway prices that are now upon us?

(5) Even now—especially now—would the continuation of rationing, a strong OPA and, yes, a strong wage stabilization program be an unwarranted interference with free enterprise and free collective bargaining?

If you accept this statement of 122 bishops, ministers, priests, rabbis and laymen as an accurate analysis of Judaeo-Christian ethics in these matters, answers to the above questions should by all odds come quickly and easily to the tongue.

JOHN C. CORT.

Books of the Week

The Garden. V. Sackville-West. Doubleday. $2.00.

Small pleasures must correct great tragedies
Therefore of gardens in the midst of war
I boldly tell . . .

THE AUTHOR of "The Land" long ago established herself as one of the few classical poets now writing in English. She is also a sensitive prose writer, as evidenced by her novels and her biographies and essays, and notably by her double study of the two Saint Teresas, "The Eagle and the Dove," in which she brings together, across three hundred years, two women as entirely dissimilar as it is possible to be.

Her present theme is to follow the year around in her own, very English, garden. In gardening, as in art, the quest is for:

a consummation rare, entire
When harmony resolved without disperse
The broken patterns of the universe
And joins the particles of our desire.
Hint of the secret synthesis that lies
So surely round some corner of our road
.....
Suspected cipher that implies a code

but she concludes her philosophizing introduction with a malice worthy of Pope:

we, by nature sadly born to strive
And our unending race of search to run
Forever started, never to be won
And might be disappointed to arrive.

In winter, she describes how the gardener dreams "of those imagined woods in a clear treble"—of Andes or Yunnan, of Tibet or Sikkim. Or of remembered, alien gardens: the Escorial, the dogwood of the new world. But, with the spring, the gardener's mind returns to England. In a lovely pastiche of the metre of W. H. Auden's "The Sea and the Mirror" she writes:

Beauty's not always in a scarlet robe
She wears an old black shawl
She flouts the flesh and shows the bone
When winter trees are tall
More beautiful than fact may be
The shadow on the wall."

She follows the seasons with amusement as well as amazement:

Bores, the herbacious plants, that gladly take
Whatever's given, and make no demand
Beyond the careless favor of a stake

But returns always to the earth that is more to the garden than all its flowers:

Where is your armistice? Gardener you hope for none
It will not be, till you yourself breed maggots.

For she is aware, as Kipling was, that "half a proper gardener's time is spent upon his knees." When, after April, resurgent May follows

It is a columbarium full of doves
A susurration of the living leaves.

Later, when "autumn in felted slippers shuffles on" she knows

We are the humble echo of great saints
Who knew that God was all, and all was God

and remembers, on every page, what most of us recall cursorily but once a year, *"quia pulvis, sumus, et in pulverem reverteremus."*

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Giovanni Bellini. Phaidon Edition. Philip Hendy and Ludwig Goldscheider. Oxford. $6.50.

IN THEIR foreword to this newest addition to the excellent Phaidon Press series of art monographs, the editors assert that they are attempting only "a broad interpretation of the artist's achievement and his place in history," leaving for a later companion volume, "intended for the less innocent reader . . . a discussion of the problems of attribution and chronology, a complete Catalogue Raisonné and illustrations of the remainder of Bellini's pictures and drawings." Philip Hendy's introduction, however, is unusually thorough in its compressed discussion of all aspects of Giovanni Bellini's background, influences (passive and active), development and oeuvre; and nearly 100 of Bellini's works are illustrated, the majority in superb large-scale photogravure, six in color; in addition, illustrations of associated paintings and sculpture are scattered through the introduction.

The modern taste for the primitive and for formal values in art has made it the fashion to prefer Bellini's early work to the output of his maturity and late years. The present-day eye finds in his early tempera panels—strongly influenced by his brother-in-law Mantegna and for centuries regarded as the work of another artist—a strength and precision of contour, an intensity of feeling and a severity of execution which afford a welcome con-

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trast to the formlessness and atmospheric illusionism which gradually spread through European painting subsequent to the introduction of the oil technique, due in part to Bellini's own example.

Mr. Hendy does not agree with this view. Bellini's major achievement, in his opinion, was "to marry the more structural and abstract tradition of Italy with the realism and luminosity of Flanders, and so to produce a means of expression which was larger than either, and would become, after he was dead, the common means of all Europe."

Renaissance painting, as Bellini knew it through the frescoes of Uccello, Castagno and Mantegna, was, according to Mr. Hendy, "a kind of colored drawing." In nearly all of Bellini's earliest pictures, the method of creating form continued essentially linear, although he showed himself increasingly concerned with the expressive value of light. As he reached maturity—and reached as far as Flanders for inspiration, learning its oil technique from Antonello da Messina—he relied less and less upon contours and more and more upon color and light, until line dissolved into these and form and color and light became equal elements, resulting in "complete plasticity."

This "technical evolution, even the variety of his expression, are only the outward sign of a revolution in vision which he brought about by the new breadth and depth of his sympathy with life. His new degree of love for man and nature and the complex and flexible method which he invented for its expression broadened Italian Renaissance into European painting, and laid the foundation for most of the manifold development of the succeeding centuries."

What Bellini achieved, in short, was "the ideal conquest of nature," which Mr. Hendy considers "more useful" than the "mechanical one" achieved by present-day abstract painters. "His [Bellini's] painting is one of the great achievements in man's historic conquest of his environment. A mere illusion has of course no value, as is proved by so many paintings of the nineteenth century. The value of the illusion created by him depends upon its profundity. Without it he found that he could not completely conquer the third dimension, could not achieve its complete unification with the other two, or the perfect synthesis of the three elements: form and color and light. It is notable that modern 'abstract' art has been able to make only limited use of the third dimension; while the visual profundity of the third dimension in the picture seems to have a power to evoke a corresponding profundity of response from the emotions. When the associations of the picture's subject are such as to arouse deep feelings, the solidity and depth of the illusion are the only limits to its power of expression. To attempt to separate the emotional response directed by the associations from the formal qualities which drive them home is to try to undo the wonderful wholeness of Bellini's art."

The volume reproduces a dozen examples of Bellini's work in this country, including such masterpieces as the Frick "Saint Francis," the Bache "Blond Youth in Black," the Mellon "Youth in Scarlet," the Kress "Condottiere" and "Saint Jerome Reading, in a Rocky Landscape." Each one of these is a powerful argument in favor of Mr. Hendy's thesis. Even so, I think, there are many who will continue to prefer the Davis Bequest "Madonna Adoring the Child" at the Metropolitan to the later "Virgin and Child, Before a Friulian Village" at the same museum, whether on the basis of formal or emotional qualities.

DAVID BURNHAM.

The Fall of Valor . Charles Jackson. Rinehart. $2.75.

TAKEN together "The Lost Week End" and "The Fall of Valor" constitute an attempt to deal with disease. Some of our critics have tried to discuss the new Jackson book as lacking the "wallop" of his earlier novel. This seems to me to be a mistake. For it proceeds on the theory that a good many of us drink to excess—and hence are mirrored in Don Birnam—while homosexuals are intermediate people.

All this, I think, misses the point that Mr. Jackson is trying to make. And the point is that all of us who live in this era suffer a defect of will. We are drawn terribly, yet fascinated, toward what we know to be evil because we lack the internal strength to carry the burden of living. We have, as William James once put it, half-knowingly declared a "moral holiday." For me, at any rate, Charles Jackson is saying all this and saying it in a stronger, purer prose than was exhibited in the famous "Lost Week End."

My first feeling, having finished this novel, was that Charles Jackson was becoming addicted to what Philip Wylie has called "the literature of addiction." But now I do not think this is the answer. My present opinion is that he is as concerned with the problem of evil as was Hawthorne or Melville. He writes of different things because the problem presents itself differently to us, and we are more conscious of our need and of our failure. But it is not for nothing that this book is written around the lines from Macbeth:

> Being unprepared,
> Our will becomes the servant to defect.

As you probably know by now, this beautifully titled novel deals, in part, with the central social problem of our time—the failure of our marriages. John Grandin, moved by a resolution to repair a deep emotional fissure in his life, and aided by the somewhat adolescently romantic arrangements of his wife (a hotel room, a full moon) is carrying the weight of profoundly disturbing anxiety.

He is a Columbia University professor who has just met the strange academic requirement of having written a book. Ironically, too, he has just been made a special adviser to young men. The petty and imposed tasks of teaching he has, thus, escaped. The rewards all serious teachers yearn for have begun to come. Yet, in spite of this, and in despite of his resolution and his hope to possess again the original impulses of his marriage, he is greatly disturbed: "For hours, sometimes, he had a sense that something was about to happen to him, something untoward, perverse, impossible to fit into his comfortably ordered life . . . for relief would come only when the secret won out (if secret it was), the nature of the crime named and accepted."

From here on the novel moves almost relentlessly like a Greek drama, to its almost predetermined end. It moves with speed and power, with clean-limbed grace and an unusually pure prose that is as contagious as the measles.

A friend of mine has pointed out to me that John Grandin should never have married Ethel in the first place. I can never understand people who quarrel with the facts of a novel, for the facts of this novel are two facts of life.

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John Grandin did marry Ethel. And in the same way, and from the same impulses, the same seeking after security, the same illusions, the same feelings of love, as you and I once married. And he remains, throughout this book, in love with his wife, and she with him.

So that the answer to my friend and to others well may be that love, as a basis for marriage, is not enough. Unaccompanied by maturity, the unfailing feeling of need, the recognition of the imperative called adjustment, full moons are about as efficacious as a Woodbury Soap treatment. If Ethel Grandin proves anything she proves this.

It is against this background, and against the sometimes vulgarity of his wife that he learns of the sudden development of what, I suppose, was latent perversion—his love for a Marine Captain. From this discovery of John Grandin to the climax is a straight line of swift, dramatic, smashing but pitying progression—the attraction of evil, the will not altogether able to resist; progression to ruin utter and complete, yet willed—the fall of valor in a soul.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

The Natural History of Nonsense. Bergen Evans. Knopf. $3.00.

BERGEN EVANS is definitely out gunning for the woolly minded. He is at great pains thoroughly to rout myths and delusions from their hiding places in even the most nimble brains today. Beginning with the premise that Twentieth Century man is not far removed from the cave man, Mr. Evans points out that for every brand new scientific thought we have there is usually an idea left over from the Stone Age to checkmate it. According to the sceptical Mr. Evans we just can't win unless we learn to be consistent sceptics.

At this point we would like to ask him a question, particularly since he seems to think that science is our sole means of salvation. What prehistoric or fossilized idea would he suggest to retard our latest scientific step forward, for example, with the atom bomb? Perhaps it is an unfair question; but still while Mr. Evans is on the topic of the dangers of sluggish thinking in these times, he should also realize the greater danger of entrusting our destinies to the machinations of science alone. Is not that what we have done all along; tried to live in a fool's paradise making ourselves believe that the life of the spirit has no place in our brave new test tube world?

The author is a bit overambitious in his debunking of the sophistries in our modern thought, especially when he assails the dogma of the Church, or glibly underestimates the influence that theological doctrines have on the enlightened minority for whom he is writing. Then there is his irritating cavalier manner of brushing off certain mystics at a time when one of the most brilliant iconoclasts of our age, Aldous Huxley, has come out in a recent preface and practically apologized for ever having written his widely read cynical novel, "Brave New World."

Mr. Evans can even be ponderous when it comes to ecclesiastic matters. In the chapter dealing with the centuries old Adam's Navel dispute between theologians he quite unintentionally puts forth a strong defense for those "subtle sophists" who argued that the real "use or office" of Adam's navel was arranged by God "in order to test the faith of later men," to see whether they

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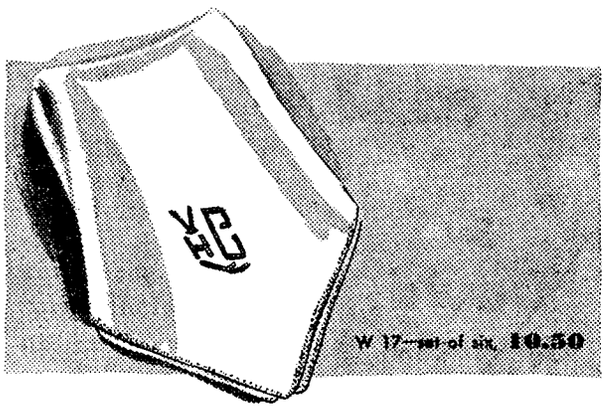

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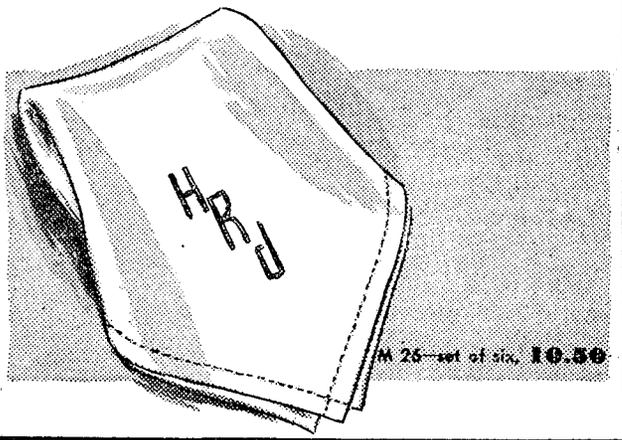

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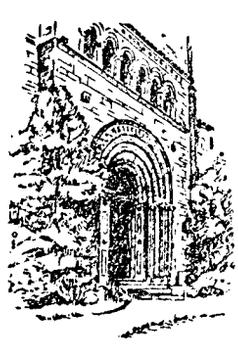

Prospective students should make early application.

"preferred to be reasonable or devout." Mr. Evans says the question still crops up whether Adam did or did not have a navel. Evans would appear to be treading dangerous ground here. What he is really taking for granted is that most of his readers believe Adam and Eve to be pure fable, when there should be no technical dilemma for painters or sculptors if they were generally accepted as legendary. But even the author registers surprise at finding that famous doubter, Sir Thomas Browne on the side of the anti-Navelists.

To the average reader a great deal of this may sound like a storm in a teacup; but it is only one of many chapters that make up this stimulating book. It would be unfair to leave an erroneous impression that Bergen Evans has set out to give us nothing more than provocative bait for the cranks and crackpots who relish controversy. He has done us a service in disproving the more popular misconceptions which spring from old wives' tales, taboos, and folk legends of childhood or race. Where he has failed, however, is in trying to entertain and edify us at the same time. He has compressed entirely too much material into one volume; that is if we are to take him at his word and regard "The Natural History of Nonsense" as "a sort of handbook for young recruits in the gay cause of common sense." In the first place the vast evidence he has accumulated on flora, fauna, or the human and subhuman species, is sometimes more confusing than helpful. We are often apt to find ourselves absorbing much more than we reject of his fantastic lore which the author originally intended for us not to harbor at all.

RICHARD MC LAUGHLIN.

Joy in the Morning. P. G. Wodehouse. Doubleday. $2.00.

IN HIS definitive study of the position of P. G. Wodehouse in modern European history George Orwell quotes a parting remark Mr. Wodehouse is supposed to have uttered on that depressing day in the summer of 1940 when he found himself face to face with a segment of the German army. "Perhaps," sighed Mr. Wodehouse, "Perhaps after this I shall write a serious book."

This is the first book Mr. Wodehouse has produced since his embarrassing stay in enemy company, and while it is not a particularly funny book, I suppose he deserves some sort of credit—up to this moment anyway—for withholding the serious work which he threatened. In this one Mr. Wodehouse sets his familiar humor machinery going in an English village called Steeple Bumpleigh. Bertie Wooster and Jeeves are present; the complications are piled one upon the other for 250 pages or so, and then in a final 25-page burst that old inimitable Jeeves puts almost everything right.

The word is going around these days that Jeeves has grown old in service and that Mr. Wodehouse is not as funny as he used to be. It is true, certainly, that Jeeves is getting on, but I can't see that Mr. Wodehouse has changed any as an entertainer. Instead. the world and the crowd who always liked Wodehouse have gone back on him; perhaps it's become just too difficult to believe, even in fun, in the England of Wooster instead of the England of Atlee.

Sweet River in the Morning. Winston Clewes. Appleton. $2.50.

IF THERE is going to be a second printing of this book—and it seems to me that Mr. Clewes has as much right to a second printing as anyone else who has

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appeared in the short range novel class since the 1st of September—I suggest that Mr. Clewes and his handlers come out from behind John Donne and call this book by its real name: "Charlie Balcum Against the World." This change might appeal to an old-fashioned class of readers who haven't had a book aimed their way for a long time, and it might also help to clear away some of the near-significant mist so often blown up around quite ordinary novels.

Charlie Balcum is a young English chap who is not at all like Sebastian Flyte. His upbringing has been extremely mean and filthy—a disrupted home, a boozy, snarling father, and extraordinary industrial poverty. Mr. Clewes takes up with Charlie as he is heading into manhood and attempts to show why he is a lonely, delinquent young fellow who hates every rule of the social body and doesn't care one way or the other what becomes of his native England in the second World War. As a voter Mr. Clewes probably thinks that the Labor Government will accomplish considerable good for Charlie and his kind, but as a novelist he looks beyond politics to a much more intricate explanation of his hero's unhappiness and suggests that Charlie Balcum's world has been spun out of the desires, struggles, and heartbreaks of a number of puzzled, angry people, most of whom passed through the world before Charlie's time. In an effort to get all this to his readers Mr. Clewes indulges in a flock of technical strategems which have been successful most often in radio or the movies. Once in a while he traps a bit of the complex magic which makes human life such a stunning affair, but frequently he is merely going on about something; for instance, that old favorite of poetic writers: *Time*. JOHN BRODERICK.

The Bitter Season. Robert M. Coates. Harcourt. $2.50.

MR. ROBERT M. COATES describes a winter of discontent in wartime New York. His central character has both an internal and an external cause for frustration. His wife has divorced him, leaving him lonely and disheartened. Too old to fight, he feels at loose ends because he has no part in the war but that of the helpless spectator. By the end of the novel his heartache because of the separation has largely vanished, for he finds appeasement in the company of Valerie, a Dutch refugee. His frustration at being a mere civilian is helped also when he can share with the rest of America the sense of climax at the D-Day landings.

"The Bitter Season" is a story of frustration rather than of heroism. The central character is not one of the stalwarts behind the man behind the gun. He is an honest soul, with a strain of physical courage, but he is a hero only in the sense that he evokes our compassion. No doubt the author did not intend him to be a great figure, but one may regret that the character, like so many modern characters, fails to be as great as his grief.

Mr. Coates is at his best when he is describing the spirit of wartime New York. In a manner not unlike that of Thomas Wolfe, he creates a number of memorable and realistic vignettes. One remembers, after he has laid down the book, his worried patrons at coffee-pot counters, the brooding taxi drivers, and the unhappy civilians standing shoulder to shoulder with men in uniform in crowded bar rooms. Many readers will probably find the author's fugitive characters and his descriptions of the New York scene more interesting than the lucubrations of his frustrated hero. MAURICE J. QUINLAN.

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The Inner Forum

"North Carolina Catholic"

OF THE MORE than three and a half million people in the state of North Carolina only 13,543 are Catholics according to the 1946 Official Catholic Directory. Another way of indicating the curiously low incidence of Catholics in this part of the United States is the fact that the proportion of Catholics per thousand in North Carolina is lower than it is in China.

On October 6 the first issue of a new diocesan paper, the *North Carolina Catholic,* was published at Nazareth, N. C., near the diocesan headquarters at Raleigh. And the first issue embodied a printing of 25,000 copies. While it contains a number of NCWC newsstories, pictures, and other features commonly found in other diocesan papers, it does include a number of apparently original items as well. There is, for instance, a survey of the political records of the Catholics in the United States Senate and House of Representatives. Among the results noted was the statistic that Catholic Senators on a list of issues (drawn up by an American leftist review) voted "on the liberal side" 81 percent of the time, while the score in the House for Catholic Congressmen was 76 percent.

Then there were short articles by a variety of authors: Colonel W. F. Kernan on "The Guarantee of Peace"; Rev. William J. Smith, S.J., on "The Labor Union: Threat or Promise?"; Dorothy Fremont Grant, "They Say Catholics Are Ruled by Fear." The October 6 issue also announced that a series of articles by Hilaire Belloc would begin the following week. The new diocesan paper gives a good deal of emphasis to local news, specifically to missionary work among the Negroes and to the recently formed North Carolina Catholic Laymen's Association, which has already secured more than 1,500 books for distribution to the public libraries of the state and which has been cooperating with the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Two full pages are devoted to "News of North Carolina Catholics" from correspondents in such towns as Winston-Salem, Kinston, Charlotte, Hamlet, Jacksonville. The new paper is edited by Dale Francis with Barbara Francis and Virginia Sabotka as his assistants; it sells for two dollars a year. Bishop Waters of Raleigh gave it a warm send-off.

CONTRIBUTORS

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